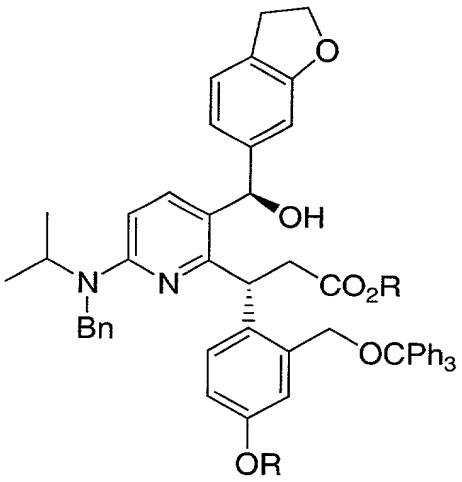
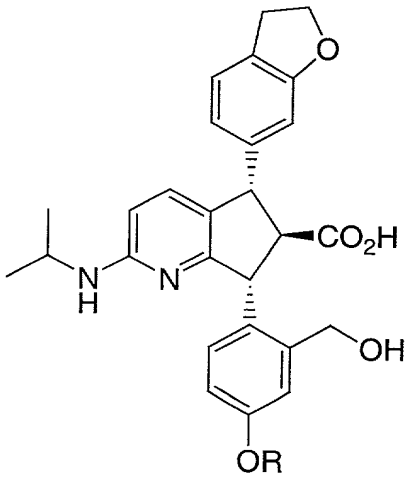


IIIa

(2) adding phosphoramide reagent to a mixture of the Grignard addition product of Formula IIIa in a second aprotic solvent and a base at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 30°C to produce the desired compound of Formula Ia.

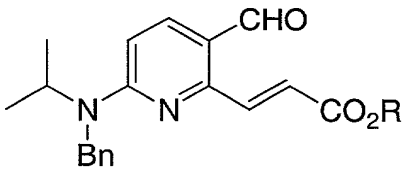
Another preferred embodiment of the present invention is a process for preparing a compound of Formula Ia,



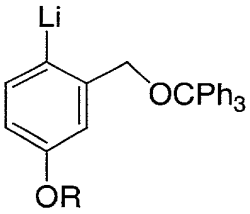
Ia

wherein R is independently H or (C_1-C_6)-alkyl comprising the steps of:

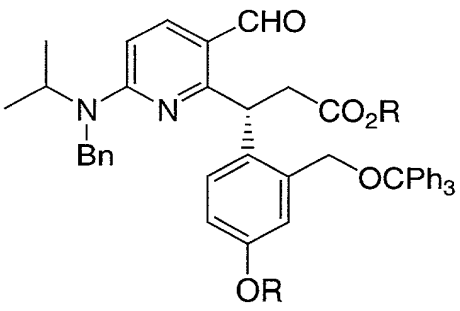
(1) reacting an α,β-unsaturated ester



with a chiral auxiliary (S,S)-pseudoephedrine followed by treatment with an aryllithium compound

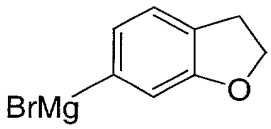


in toluene or tetrahydrofuran or a mixture thereof at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 0°C to give a conjugate adduct of Formula IIa,

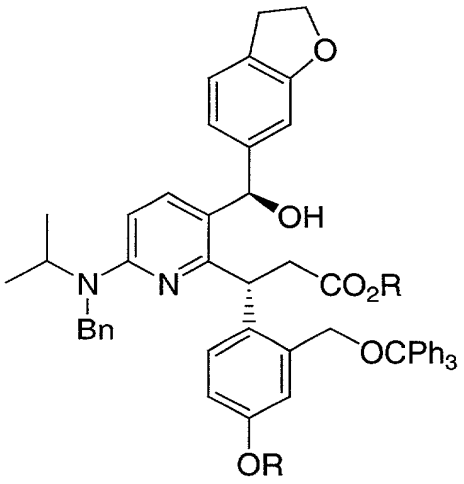


IIa

(2) reacting the conjugate adduct of Formula IIa with

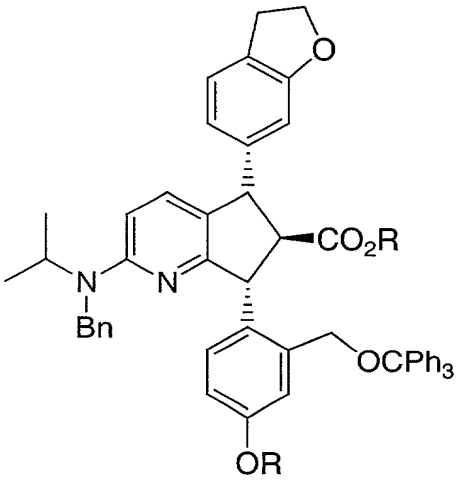


at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 30°C to give a Grignard addition product of Formula IIIa,



IIIa

(3) adding phosphoramide reagent to a mixture of the Grignard addition product of Formula IIIa in the presence of tetrahydorfuran or a mixture of tetrahydrofuran and toluene, and a base at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 30°C to produce a cyclized compound of Formula IV, and



IV

(4) removing protecting groups on the cyclized compound of Formula IV to give the desired compound of Formula Ia.